

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

- Please replace the paragraph starting on line 6 of page 24 with the following rewritten paragraph:

The high-strength connecting rod of this invention is a connecting rod so shaped as to have a connecting beam section, a big end, a small end and a joining section as stated above. The connecting rod has a portion of the smallest cross sectional area in its connecting beam section, a portion of the lowest fatigue strength at its big or small end, and a portion of varying fatigue strength in its joining and connecting beam sections. **In another embodiment, a portion which is the lowest in fatigue strength exists in at least one of the big and small ends, and a portion which varies in fatigue strength exists in each of the first and second joining sections and in the connecting beam sections.** The connecting rod is so made that the product of its cross sectional area and fatigue strength at cross section of its joining and connecting beam sections may be equal to or greater than the product of its cross sectional area and fatigue strength in its portion of the smallest cross sectional area in its connecting beam section. The connecting rod contains 0.73% or less of C on a mass basis (i.e., % by weight) and is so made that the cross section of each of its connecting beam and joining sections may be composed of a tempered martensitic structure or a ferritic-pearlitic structure, or a mixture of these structures satisfying relational expression or Eq.(1) given above. At least the entire cross section of its portion of the smallest cross sectional area in its connecting beam section may be of a tempered martensitic structure. Therefore, it is possible to achieve a reduction of residual stress in its fully hardened portion and its boundary of hardening, an improvement in the fatigue strength of the connecting rod and a reduction in the weight of the part.